FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
12-16	ORLEANS	G	EAS.31 & 32

NR HD 2001

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*:
Eastham Center

Address: 2755 State Highway

Historic Name: Higgins - Sullivan House & Store

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1851

Source: vital records, censuses

Style/Form: Gothic Revival/end house

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:
Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Barn
Store/Guest Cottage

Major Alterations *(with dates)*:
none

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

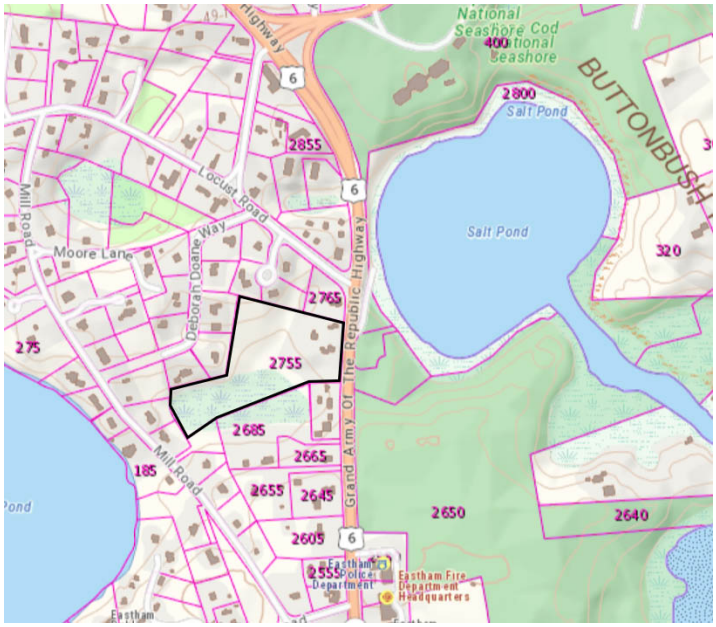
Acreage: 5.498

Setting: The house and associated buildings are situated on the State Highway amid dense roadside development comprised of historic properties, more recent summer cottage development and civic and commercial buildings. It overlooks Salt Pond.

Photograph

View from NE.

Locus Map (north at top)



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2020

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Higgins - Sullivan House, built ca. 1851, is a story-and-a-half wood frame single dwelling of the end house type and is a rare instance of the Gothic Revival style in the town (EAS.31). It is paired with a summer guest house that had originated as a store reputedly connected to the house (EAS.32). In addition, there is a front-gable barn associated with the house, later converted to a two-car garage.

The house has a three-bay front façade with a pointed gable with deep eaves decorated with pairs of scrolled brackets. An entrance capped by a cornice mounted on brackets is recessed on the north side offset by two floor-length windows. Three upper-story windows in the gable have pointed heads; a pointed arched louvered vent is positioned in the apex. The 1985 B Form states that the gable had scalloped vergeboards matching those on the store, but it would have been unlikely together with the brackets. There are story-and-a-half cross-gable bays on both sides, set back towards the rear, each with narrow pointed wall dormers facing forward and a triangular feature in the end gable. The first story of the bay on the south side is wrapped in a porch. In front of it are three floor-length windows and two small windows, one blind, above them. The north side has two blind windows in front of the cross-bay. A kitchen wing is attached to the rear of the house and appears to have been expanded by additions in later years.

The store is located north of the house. It is a story-and-a-half wood frame commercial building built by 1858 when it is depicted on the Barnstable County map. It has a brick foundation and a three-bay, gabled front façade with a center entrance flanked by windows and a single window centered at the top. Scalloped vergeboards decorate the edges of the roof's deep overhangs. In form it resembles store buildings of the period. A story has been passed down that the store had been attached to the house and moved to its present location later at the turn of the 20th century. However, there is no practical location on the house where the store with its front-gable façade could have been attached. Perhaps it had been closer to the house and connected to the cross-gable bay on the north side by a hyphen of some sort. The store was converted into a summer cottage in the 1880s or 1890s. It would appear that guest accommodations were located in additions constructed at the rear of the store building, which remained essentially intact as a commercial space. (It functioned as a restaurant by one account.) An entrance was created on the south side of the expanded building for access to rooms in the rear wings.

The barn's steep front-gable roof associates it very convincingly with the construction date for the house. It likely had a central vehicle bay flanked by windows typical of such buildings and a mow door centered in the upper story. Alterations have been made to create two garage bays with overhead doors on the first story and a window in place of the mow door above. A garden shed has been added north of the barn in recent years.

The house is centered on its parcel's long highway frontage elevated slightly behind a small yard. An open yard to the north contains the barn, set behind the house at the end of a long driveway, and the store in the northeast corner of the lot. The area south of the house is wooded as is the rear of the property where a wetland is located.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house at 2755 State Highway was probably built about 1851 for Benaiah G. Higgins (1829-76), who had married in that year. The eldest son of David Higgins (1804-94) and his wife Sally Swain (1807-97), Benaiah Higgins was a mariner; he married Maria T. Dill, daughter of Heman and Caroline Dill of Eastham, in late December 1851. No deed has been located that transfers the land on which it was built to Benaiah; in fact, his father, who owned a 60-acre farm on Massasoit Road and other land in this part of town, owned the land where the house stands until after Benaiah's death. In 1855, however, he bought a store that was identified in the deed as attached to Benaiah's house; the store was described as one and a half stories high with one room on the first floor and one above it.[1] The 1855 state census clearly lists him in this neighborhood as a master mariner with his wife Maria and two children, Lillian M., born in 1852, and David G., born two years later. The store is marked on the 1858 Eastham map, though Benaiah Higgins's name is not noted.

[1] Mary W. Higgins to Ben Higgins, 7 June 1855, BCD 60:22. Mary W. Higgins (1822-56) was an unmarried daughter of Daniel and Polly Higgins of Wellfleet.

The 1860 census credits Benaiah Higgins with $1000 in real property, and by 1865 he and his wife Maria and two other children, Celia F., born in 1861, and Sarah, born in 1863. Higgins died of consumption in 1876, and the 1880 census lists his widow and three children—Sarah, born in 1863; Franklin, born in 1867; and Effie Frances, born the year her father died—in the household. The 1880 Eastham map identifies David Higgins as owner of two houses on and near the site of 2755 State Highway, and in 1883 he sold four acres and the house to his widowed daughter-in-law and four of her children (Celia had died in 1875 and David in 1881) for $500.[2]

Maria T. Higgins married again, in 1883 to realtor George Edwin Heath of Nashua, New Hampshire, and Cape newspapers make clear that she afterward rented 2755 State Highway. Two days after the property was actually sold in May 1892,[3] the *Yarmouth Register* reported, "H. M. Sullivan, manager of Hotel Hamilton, Bermuda, was in town of the 17th looking at the house that belongs to Mrs. George Heath, Nashua, N.H. He thinks of buying it. People are coming this way very fast. Who knows but what old Eastham will be a summer resort in a few years? All the houses are being bought up by out-of-town parties as soon as they are vacated."[4] Maria T. Heath and her husband continued to vacation at their "summer cottage" in Eastham after the sale and may have occupied the cottage on the property (EAS.32).[5] ; According to Eastham Historical Society house files, the cottage had once been attached to the house and was moved seventy-five feet to the north before 1890, but it is difficult to conceive how the store would have been directly connected to the house.

The 1900 census lists Herbert Manning Sullivan (1847-1921) as a farmer in this neighborhood in a house with this wife and three daughters. Sullivan was born in Wakefield, and in 1885 he was working in Boston as a hotel manager when he married Christine H. MacLane, a native of Quebec who had emigrated in 1878 and was then living in Manchester, New Hampshire. Their daughters—Mary D., Marion Louise, and Frances Hamilton—were all born in Bermuda between 1886 and 1891. By 1910 daughters Mary and Marion were no longer part of the household; Mary trained as a nurse at Boston City Hospital and often worked and lived in other Eastham households, and Frances was a cook at the farm school for boys on Thompson's Island in Boston Harbor. By 1915 she went to New York to study music, and by 1920 she had returned to Eastham and taught music from her parents' home. Herbert Sullivan was by then an asparagus farmer, and he served the town as a Republican state convention delegate, tree warden, and selectman from about 1904 to at least 1911. He and Eastham's other selectmen were feted in May 1911 for having helped defeat a state senate bill that would have permitted fishermen from Wellfleet and other town to take shellfish from Eastham waters.[6]

Herbert Sullivan died in Eastham in 1921, and his widow remained in the 2755 State Highway house with her daughter Frances. In 1930 Christine Sullivan worked as a nurse from her home, and Frances taught music. Christine Sullivan died in 1939, and by then daughter Christine had married Edward J. Hayden, an engineer for the state highway department, and had moved to Middleborough. The 2755 State Highway house remained a seasonal home for the Sullivan sisters. Frances Sullivan Hayden died in 1952, and ten years later her husband, then living in Clearwater, Florida, sold the property to his niece, Beverly Plante of Warwick, Rhode Island.[7] Beverly Campbell Plante was the daughter of Marion Louise Sullivan and her husband Charles Newton Campbell, who married in Eastham in 1912; Campbell and his father Cyrus owned property at 590 Massasoit Road (EAS.778) and 655 Massasoit Road (EAS.79) from 1903, and Cyrus Campbell had been the proprietor of numerous Boston hotels about the turn of the century and may have known Herbert Sullivan from that trade. Beverly Campbell was born in Eastham in 1919, and in 1940 she married Normand Francis Plante (1917-2017) of Cranston, Rhode Island. Plante was a teamster, shipping clerk, and later a toolmaker, and the couple lived in Providence and later Warwick.

In 1971 Charles N. Campbell sold his inherited interest in the 2755 State Highway property to Beverly Plante, and in 1976 their son Cyrus H. Campbell son deeded his share to her as well.[8] About ten days later Beverly Plante added her husband to the title for the property. After their parents' death son Normand F. Jr. and married daughter Elaine F. Wright of Springfield deeded the

[2] David Higgins to Maria T. Higgins, Lillian N. Fish, Sarah A. Higgins, Frank C. Higgins and Effie T. Higgins, 14 November 1883, BCD 154:352.
[3] Maria T. Heath, Nashua NH, to Christie Sullivan, 26 May 1892, BCD 201:457.
[4] "Eastham," *Yarmouth Register*, 28 May 1892, 5.
[5] Maria T. Dill Higgins Heath died in Somerville in August 1902.
[6] *Yarmouth Register*, 27 May 1911, 5.
[7] Edward J. Hayden, Clearwater FL, to Beverly Plante, Warwick RI, 4 September 1962, BCD 1181:118.
[8] Charles N. Campbell to Beverly Plante, Warwick RI, 5 April 1971, BCD 1506:862; Cyrus H. Campbell to Beverly C. Plante, Warwick RI, 3 August 1976, BCD 2384:264.

property to Elaine and her husband Stuart Alan Wright, and the Wrights placed the property in trust in the same years. The Stuart A. and Elaine F. Wright Joint Revocable Trust was the owner of record in 2020.[9]

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MAPS
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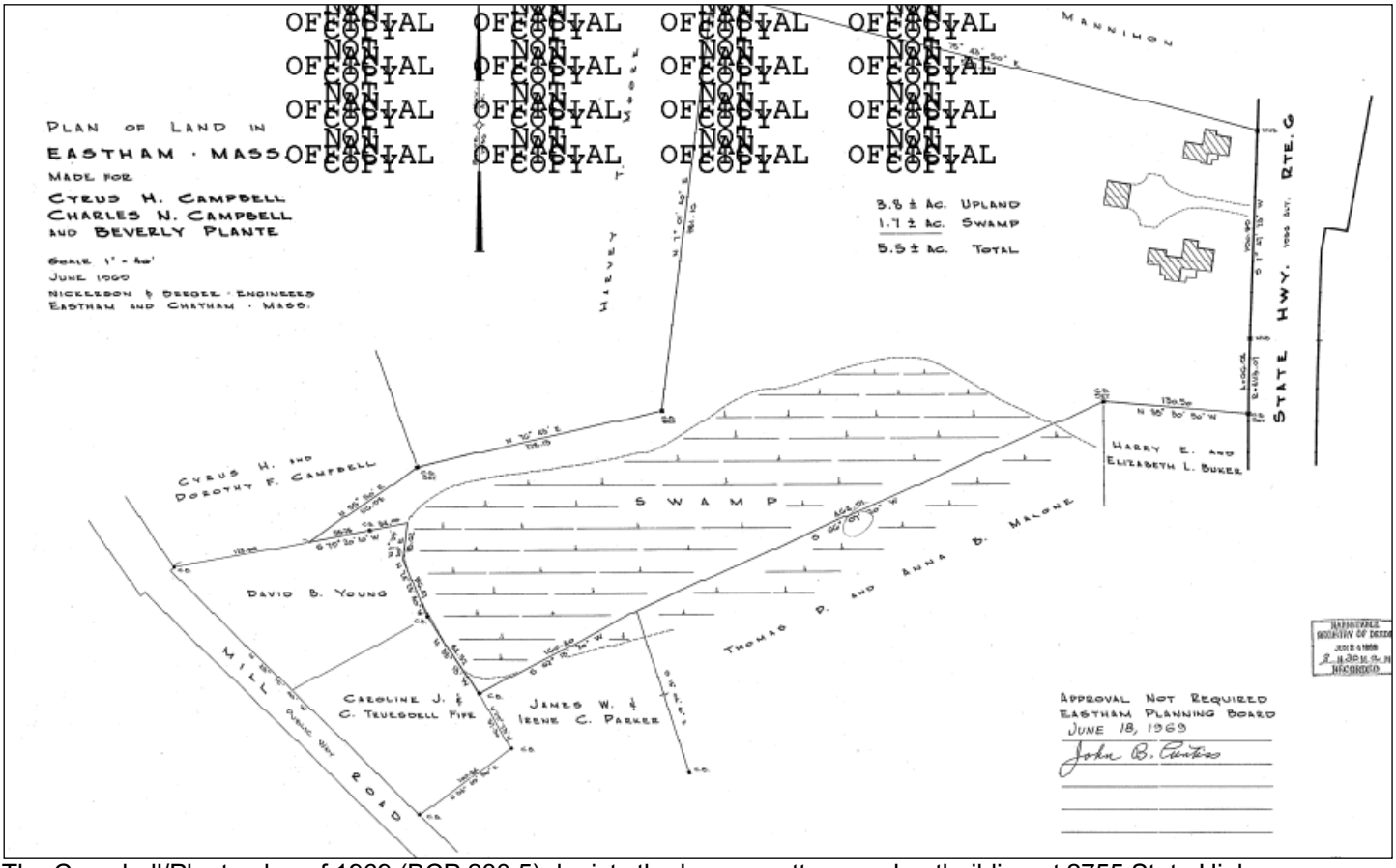
Atlas of Barnstable County, Massachusetts . . . from Official Plans and Actual Surveys. Boston: Walker Lithograph and Publishing Co., 1905, 1910.

[9] Beverly C. Plante to Norman F. and Beverly C. Plante, Warwick RI, 14 August 1976, BCD 2391:78; Normand F. Plante Jr., Eastham, and Elaine F. Wright, Springfield, to Elaine F. and Stuart Alan Wright, 27 September 2017, BCD 30812:60; Elaine F. and Stuart Alan Wright, Springfield, to Elaine F. and Stuart Alan Wright, trustees Stuart A. Wright and Elaine F. Wright Joint Revocable Trust, 14 November 2017, BCD 30940:162. The house and cottage are depicted on "Plan of Land in Eastham, Mass. Made for Cyrus H. Campbell, Charles N. Campbell and Beverly Plante," June 1969, BCP 230:5.

SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



The Campbell/Plante plan of 1969 (BCP 230:5) depicts the house, cottage and outbuilding at 2755 State Highway.

PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)

View of house from NE.

View of house from SE.

View of store/guest house from SE.

View of barn from east.

[Delete this page if no Criteria Statement is prepared]

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district

☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ **A** ☐ **B** ☒ **C** ☐ **D**

Criteria Considerations: ☐ **A** ☐ **B** ☐ **C** ☐ **D** ☐ **E** ☐ **F** ☐ **G**

Statement of Significance by_____Neil Larson_____
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Higgins-Sullivan House and Store, the house of which was built in the Gothic Revival style in ca. 1850 appears to be significant under National Register Criterion C as a distinguished example of Gothic Revival domestic architecture in the Town of Eastham. In form, plan and massing, the house embodies distinctive characteristics of the picturesque taste of the period with characteristic elements such as pointed gables and dormers, bracketed eaves and lancet windows. It is accompanied by a front gable barn of equal date and a building that functioned as a store before being converted into a guest house.

The property is also significant under Criterion A for its association with early commercial and tourist history in Eastham. The house was probably built for the mariner Benaiah G. Higgins (1829-76) who married Maria T. Dill, in 1851. In 1855 he bought a store that was identified in the deed as attached to Benaiah's house; the store was described as one and a half stories high with one room on the first floor and one above it. The store is marked on the 1858 Eastham map, though not connected to the house. After Benaiah's death, Maria T. Higgins married again, in 1883 to realtor George Edwin Heath of Nashua, New Hampshire. In May 1892 the *Yarmouth Register* reported, "H. M. Sullivan, manager of Hotel Hamilton, Bermuda, was in town of the 17th looking at the house that belongs to Mrs. George Heath, Nashua, N.H. He thinks of buying it. People are coming this way very fast. Who knows but what old Eastham will be a summer resort in a few years? All the houses are being bought up by out-of-town parties as soon as they are vacated."